

What Shapes a Soul?: Fr. Ronald Rolheiser OMI

In a section of her poem *The Leaf and the Cloud*, Mary Oliver describes her feelings as she stands by the gravesite of her father and mother. She reflects on how both their virtues and faults influenced her life. Then she ends the reflection with these words:

*I give them – one, two, three, four – the kiss of courtesy,
of sweet thanks.*

May they sleep well. May they soften.

But I will not give them the kiss of complicity.

I will not give them the responsibility for my life.

What shapes our souls? How much is mystery? How much is genetics? How much is the influence of others? How much is our own responsibility? For instance, when I reflect on what helped shape my own soul, the influence of my parents looms large. Part of me is my mother. She was a sensitive person, someone who sometimes couldn't say no when it was called for. So, she often found herself over stretched and tired. Today some would say that she didn't keep proper boundaries. She had sixteen children. Her critics can rest their case.

She was a generous person, always giving things away. As a child I was sometimes angry with her for that. I didn't want a generous mother. I wanted things. What she wanted was harmony in her family. I remember her coming to tears one Saturday morning as she was cleaning the house and trying to keep peace and order in a family that, on that particular day, was given over to disorder and arguments. She told us how disappointed she was that our family wasn't like the Holy Family. We weren't the Holy Family and she was sometimes frustrated, not so much with us as with the plain inadequacy of life. Beyond this, she was a happy person, more naturally buoyant in spirit than my father. She danced more easily than he, laughed more spontaneously, and was an easier touch for us as kids. She took life less reflectively than he, though not as unreflectively as we naively supposed. During one period of her life, she kept a diary and it testified to the fact that she'd thought more deeply about things than we'd supposed. Her deepest longing was for a true home and here she got lucky. She met my father. From soon after they met until they day he died, they became soulmates in every sense of that word. She didn't have to tell him her secrets or share with him her frustrations, and neither he in reverse. They understood each other without having to explain themselves. In all my years of growing up, I cannot ever recall them having a single misunderstanding or even being angry with each other. My father died of cancer and she, who had been strong until his death, died three months later of pancreatitis and a loneliness nobody could cure. Today some would look at that and say she was a co-dependent. But she would laugh and tell you that she got what she wanted from life. She died of missing my father, died happy. There's something to be envied in that.

I'm her son and when I contemplate these things, my own soul becomes less of a mystery, as do my struggles, my faults, my longings, and my strengths. I even understand why I'm tired a lot! And then a good part of me is my father. There's a lot in me that can be explained by my genes. My father didn't dance easily, though he was a deeply affectionate man. Dancing was too public for him. He preferred to express affection in private. He loved my mother, his family, and most everyone, but his way was not to trumpet this in public. There was a reticence here that could sometimes look like coldness, but you had to read his actions and his eyes. They told a different story. He had an abhorrence of all exhibitionism, hated long ceremonies, and loathed cheap public displays of anything. He also disliked excess in anything. His was the way of moderation, proper restraint in everything. Our family likes to quip that moderation was his only excess. He was the stubborn uncompromising moral principle in my upbringing. He agonized over all that was not right in the world and his patience didn't always meet the test. I feared his eyes at those times when I disappointed him. I also feared, and still do, ever disappointing him. He was one of the most moral people I've ever met and he had a sixth sense that was nearly infallible. He knew right from wrong in a way I couldn't doubt. He instructed me on that – often against my protests. If I end up in hell, I can't plead ignorance. My father equipped me, faith-wise and morally, for life. But I have the faults that come with that too, his faults, compounded by my own. So much of us, our strengths and weaknesses, take root in our upbringing – but still, we are responsible for our own lives.

Pob Bendith. God bless you&Keep you. Fr Pius CMI



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11th August 2024 19th Sunday Ordinary

LITURGY OF THE WEEK: Psalter Week III

Mass times: Mon:10am Tue:7pm, Wed-Friday 10am. Sat.5.30pm. Sun.11am

Live Streaming Link:

<https://www.churchservices.tv/mold>

10th August Saturday 5.30pm

For People of the Parish

11th August Sunday 11am

Diamond Wedding: Int. Maureen
& Kingsley Briscoe (*Patrick Oliver*)

Confessions

On Saturdays
and Sundays
before the
Mass
(Saturdays
5pm to 5.20
and Sundays
10.30am to
10.50).
Weekdays
after the Mass,
on Request.



Monday Liturgy of the day
12th Aug Int. Rong Chen (*Yaming Lin*)

Tuesday Liturgy of the day **7pm**
13th Aug Peter Gahan RIP B'day (*Bridie Williams*)

Wednesday Mem. Maximillian Kolbe, Priest & Martyr
14th Aug Michael Nicholson RIP (*Bridie Williams*)

Thursday Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary
15th Aug Mary Zhang RIP (*Yaming Lin*)

Friday Liturgy of the day
16th Aug Mary Shi RIP (*Yaming Lin*)

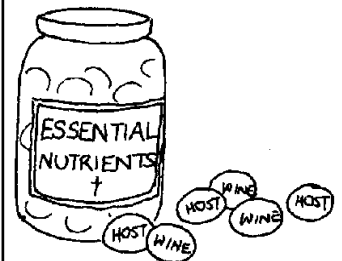
20th Sunday of Ordinary Time B

17th August Saturday 5.30pm
For People of the Parish

18th August Sunday 11am
Allen George Tyson &
James Noel Goggin RIP
(*Goggin & Rathbone Families*)

HEALTHY EATING

We live in an age of health centres around food awareness. We've become accustomed to looking at the jar before buying it, to see if it contains artificial colorants, E-numbers, too much salt or an overdose of caffeine. And we're not averse to diet supplements either, pouring dozens of pills



down our throats each week to ensure that we've got all the right levels of vitamins and are not iron deficient. Perhaps more than any other generation we have the medical knowledge about the relationship between what we put inside ourselves and our corresponding physical and mental health. And, of course, we want to live for ever!
In today's gospel Jesus tells us that our spiritual

the eucharist. Eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ is the Christian's principal sustenance, what keeps us going in faith. There are those who act as if the eucharist were simply a ritual that we perform, a sort of social, religious action. Others view it from afar. They see communion as the sacrament reserved for those who are already holy, for good people. So they go only rarely. Both of these viewpoints give the impression that we can do without the eucharist. In fact, the eucharist is the indispensable diet for Christians. For communion is the climax of a wider action in which we gather as the Church to listen to God's word informing our way of life, in which we bring all our needs and those of our world before God that they may be transformed by the Holy Spirit, and then we enjoy the most intimate union possible

with God and each other by sharing in the food and drink of life. If we eat nothing but chips and hamburgers, we become what we eat: we become fat. If we are people of the



eucharist, we become what we eat: the Body of Christ, the Church. For the eucharist is the action by which the Church is brought into being. It moulds us into God's people and as such can never be a mere optional extra. As Jesus might have said, "Your fathers took diet supplements, yet they are dead. But whoever eats the living bread will live for ever."



QR Code for Today's Readings.

News, Notices and Events

The Sign of Peace How to give it

An ordinary handshake can sometimes send off the wrong signals. It's rather like saying hello to someone you've been sitting next to for the last half-hour. The gesture needs to be a prayer gesture. A double handclasp is favoured by some. People from the same family or who know each other very well often exchange the peace by a hug. In medieval England there used to be a metal or wooden tablet passed around for the congregation to kiss, called the "Pax Brede" or "Peace Board".

Whatever gesture is used, we have to remember that its purpose is not to exchange pleasantries with the nearby people, but to effect a prayer: that the peace and unity which Christ left as a gift to his Church may be with the other person now.

ASSUMPTION (August 15th)

All the feast days of Mary mark the great mysteries of her life and her part in the work of redemption. The central mystery of her life and person is her divine motherhood, celebrated both on Christmas Day and on the feast of Mary, Mother of God. The Immaculate Conception marks the preparation for this, so that she had the fullness of grace from the first moment of her existence, completely untouched by sin. Her whole being throbbled with divine life from the very beginning, readying her for the exalted role of mother of the Saviour.

The Assumption completes God's work in Mary, since it was not fitting that the flesh that gave life to God himself should undergo corruption. The Assumption crowns God's work in Mary as she ends her earthly life and enters eternity. The feast turns our eyes in that direction, where we will follow when our earthly life is over.

The Church's feasts are not just commemorations of historical events; they do not look only to the past. They look to the present and to the future and give us an insight into our own relationship with God. The Assumption looks to eternity and gives us hope that we, too, will follow Our Lady when our life is ended.

Thank you: Columban Fathers Mission Appeal Last weekend raised £778.57

Cleaning rota: Any help with cleaning the church would be greatly appreciated - new rota at the back of church. Many thanks - *Kath Kusinski*



Man: "Your sermon was awful."
Woman: "Take no notice, Father. He only repeats what he hears others say."

Reminder that if you would like to take up the **Offertory Gifts** please let the stewards as you enter before mass.

Let us Pray for the sick:

Deacon David Joy, Tricia Evans, Rianna Taylor and family, Debra Roberts, Lauren Dunlop, Pam Cox, Anne Jones, and Franciszek Williams

We remember in our prayer

Those whose anniversaries Occur this week

(10th Aug) Thomas Dalton, Thomas Nolan, Margaret Evans, William George Scanlon (11th Aug) Ann Nolan, Peter Hyland, Anna Volk (12th Aug) J.Parker, Philip David Jones, Ethel Saum, Gwilym Rees, Giuditta Izzo (13th Aug) Thomas James Shannon, Annie McVey, Josephine Owen, Jan Sieka Margowski (14th Aug) John Cooper, Bridget Welsh, Ann Cafferty, Thomas Waldron, Edith May Rimmer, Agnes Davies, Luigi Sereni, Helen Powers, Michael Butterworth (15th Aug) Mary Geraghty, William Parry, Thomas Finn, George Dykes (16th Aug) Katie Jones,